

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended herein. Support for the amendment is found at page 4, lines 16-24 and Figs. 2 and 3 of the specification. Applicants' undersigned representative thanks Examiner Nguyen for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview of August 22, 2006. Applicants separate record of the substance of that interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

Applicants' Response to the Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by **Chien *et al.*** (6,439,835). In response thereto, applicants have amended claims 1 and 3 to more distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Specifically, applicants have included the feature that only the step portion includes a means for forming a gap wherein only the step portions of stacked impellers would be in contact. As discussed in the course of the interview, Chien is relied on by the Office for its disclosure of an impeller 7 with a blade 71 located between a front wall 711 and a rear wall 712. The Office interprets the rear wall 712 as equivalent to the main plate 10 of applicants' invention.

As further discussed during the interview, in regard to the rear wall 712 of Chien, as disclosed in Figs. 4-8, the rear wall slopes as it approaches the boss hole area. As noted during the interview, the Examiner considers this slope the equivalent of a step portion. Further, as noted during the interview, this sloping portion is rounded (i.e. there are no sharp angles which would form a step). As discussed in the course of the interview, the hypothetical stacking of the

rear wall 712 plates of Chien must be demonstrated as not forming a gap. In response thereto, applicants have amended claims 1 and 3 herein so as to include the feature that only the step portions are in contact.

As illustrated in Fig. 3 of the application, the step portion 14 has a sharp angle. The stacked main plates rest only on the sharp angle to form the gap d. However, in Chien, since the rear wall 712 has a rounded slope with no sharp angles, if the rear wall plates 712 were stacked they would fit together uniformly. Thus the rear wall plates 712 would stack similarly to the main plates 110 described in Fig. 6 of the present application and would not only rest on the step portion as is disclosed in applicants' Fig. 3. As illustrates in Fig. 3, only the step portion 14 of the adjoining plates 10 are in contact. The remainders of the plates are free of contact. The slope in the rear wall 712 of Chien's device does not constitute a step portions capable of forming a gap as required by amended claims 1 and 3, because there is no sharp angled step portion on which only contact between adjacent rearwall 712 plates would occur.

Applicants' Response to the Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 2 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Chien et al.** As the claims depend from claims 1 and 3, respectively, by addressing the rejection of the parent claims as set forth above, the rejection of claims 2 and 5 is likewise addressed by nature of the claims' dependencies.

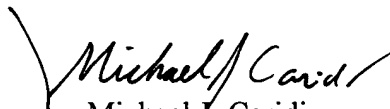
Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.116
Application No.10/501,886
Attorney Docket No. 042599

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
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